



Seasons in the Park

John Webber and Epic Production Technology



2011

Highway #1 at 168 Street

Seasons in the Park is an illumination for the pedestrian and bicycle overpass that crosses Highway #1 from Tynehead Park to 168th Street. Inspired by the fluid shape of the overpass and the natural landscape in which it is anchored, John Webber created a light-based artwork that draws colours from the leaves, flowers, and water in Tynehead Park. With this design, the whole bridge becomes an illuminated public artwork every night. The lighting effects change in response to different seasons and events.

About the Artist

John Webber is an award-winning theatre lighting and set designer. His outdoor lighting work includes Mountain Square in Whistler, BC. Based in Vancouver, John holds a BSc. in Electrical Engineering.

Artist's Statement

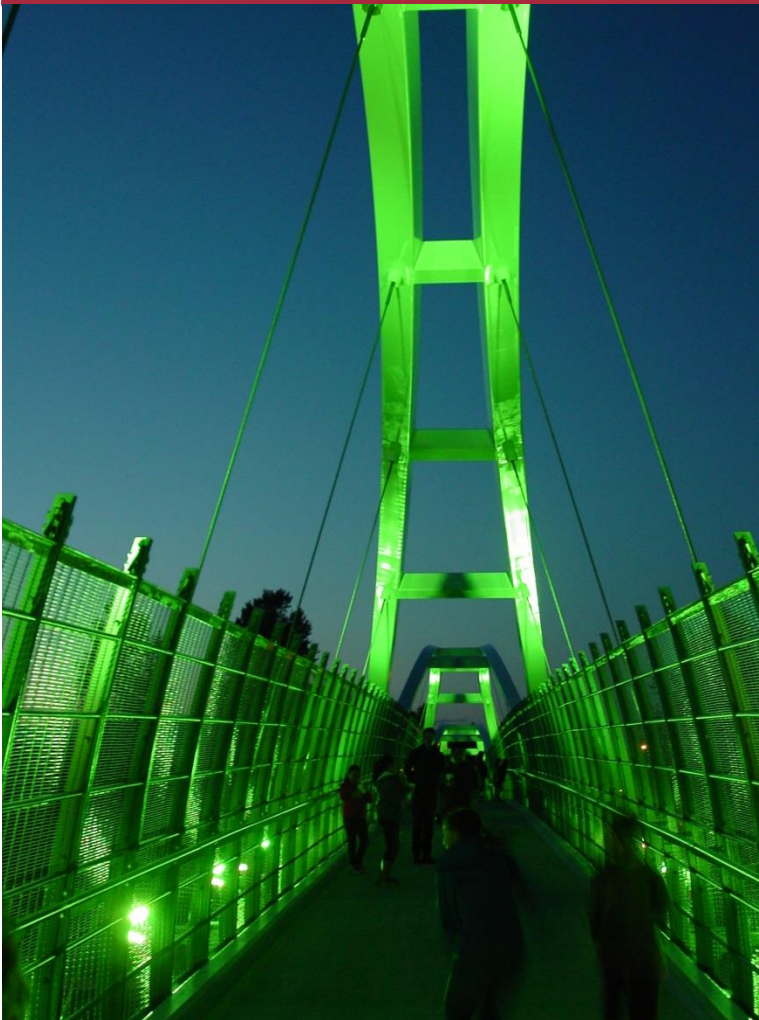
The structure of the bridge brings to mind various images of water, plants, and air. Using the colour mixing LED lighting, the band of the metal fencing, and the soaring arches, my goal is to evoke, on a grand scale, as many of these images as I can and to create active and dynamic transitions between them . . . With this repertoire of images, the bridge will tell a story of the growing city of Surrey and help to keep its ties strong to some of its past, present, future, and its place on the West Coast of North America."





Seasons in the Park

John Webber and Epic Production Technology



Bridging the Urban and the Natural: *Seasons in the Park*

Commissioned by the City of Surrey in 2010, John Webber's *Seasons in the Park* uses an LED lighting array to evoke the changing of the seasons in the Pacific Northwest. The work is installed on the Tynehead Overpass, a pedestrian bridge crossing Highway 1. It connects Tynehead Regional Park with Fraser Heights as a part of the Surrey Greenway network.

Inspired by the fluid architectural style of the bridge structure, Webber's art transcribes natural phenomena – such as the movement of water and the growth of plants – from nearby Tynehead Park onto the form of the overpass. The installation, fabricated by Epic Production Technology, features 88 lights arranged laterally across the support structures of the bridge, and is designed to illuminate both the fencing and the arches without blinding the traffic passing underneath. It is controlled via software that dynamically changes the colour of the lights in accordance with a series of digital images rendered by the artist.

Over a period of approximately forty minutes, *Seasons in the Park* presents a series of vibrant, moving light compositions. Each one conveys ecological, atmospheric, and botanical phenomena in abstract form, in accordance with the changing of the seasons over a year. Spring begins the work as white pools of light, referencing the first snowdrops to bud after the recession of winter, appear upon the arches of the bridge. Subsequent hues of green emerge on the fence of the bridge, referencing leaves, as do further colour motifs, representing local flower species such as daffodil, salmonberry, and bluebell.

Dappled sunlight and warmer hues of green mark the arrival of summer. Expanded and detailed views of the park appear: at a larger scale, moving water, representing local streams, flows across the arches of the bridge, while more green, representing the forest, traverses the walkway; at a smaller scale, the licking flames of a campfire and its burning coals symbolize late nights spent sharing stories with friends.





Seasons in the Park

John Webber and Epic Production Technology

A setting sun signifies the advent of autumn and winter. Then, pools of water begin to form among the arches, punctuated by splashes of colour; salmon are swimming upriver to their birthplaces. These pools of water slowly drain down the arches and collect into the piers of the bridge before draining away, referring to winter rains. The work concludes with an image of darkness, illuminated by points of light, echoing a nascent night sky.

Seasons in the Park reminds commuters and pedestrians of the beauty of the natural world and its ecological significance. It does this by presenting an experience of the environment in multiple ways. The artwork, connected with the bridge upon which it is displayed, provides access for commuters to Tynehead Regional Park. The artwork is a reflection of this freedom of access: it is temporal, mobile, and sensory. The movement of commuters and pedestrians is mirrored and reinforced by the lights that guide them.

Through its form, the artwork also conveys nature to the public. Vehicles passing beneath the bridge at night, or pedestrians who cross it, are presented with images which refer to nature at a sensory level. The public who encounters *Seasons in the Park* are unlikely to see it exactly the same way upon repeat viewings, as it is only possible to experience the work as a combination of the elements which compose it, which are in a state of constant movement.

The artwork complements the use of the bridge as a pathway between the park and the nearby neighbourhood, suggesting an interconnection between human life and nature. The synergy between the bridge and the art is accomplished by the ever-changing appearance of the work, which reflects nature's own cycles of growth and decay.



The flowing transitions between each segment of the presentation also reflect the passage of pedestrians across the bridge, and the traffic passing underneath. By using the bridge, pedestrians become participants in *Seasons in the Park* and the natural processes to which it alludes. In this way, the artwork helps participants to recognize their own role within natural and human-made ecologies.

Webber's work reduces environmental phenomena to an abstract form. In this form, it complements the technical design of the bridge, and the engineering challenges it presents. As such, Webber's artwork makes sense of nature within the context of daily human life. It places nature within human experience, and extends the borders of Tynehead Regional Park beyond their official designation.

